



TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES**

December 1, 2015
Municipal Center, Conference Room A
7:00 p.m.

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A regular Board of Selectmen meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. Present: Craig Dauphinais, Jennifer Thomas, Bruce Spinney, Dennis Flynn, Brook Padgett, Tim McInerney, Doug Willardson and Laura St. John- Dupuis.

Direct Solar

Mr. McInerney introduced Jill Appel from Direct Solar to discuss the possibility of bringing solar to Grafton. Mr. McInerney stated that the Town will vet a vendor that will be in Grafton long term to handle installs and stated that Direct Solar has its own contractors for installations. He further stated that a lot of the vetting has been done by the Energy Committee.

Jill Appel/Director of Community Programs at Direct Solar addressed the Board of Selectmen and states that she is primarily a coach to solar coaches. Ms. Appel introduced Troy Herrod, District Sales Manager and Artie Crocker, Solar Consultant. Ms. Appel provided some information about solar and activity in the state of Massachusetts stating that in 2006 there was some activity in Massachusetts. In 2014 there was much more solar at 1,000 megawatts of solar. Ms. Appel stated that the state of MA is one of the leading states in the country providing solar. Equipment pricing is lower, 30% drop from a few years ago, a 30% federal tax incentive that expires the end of 2016, a State Tax Credit and Solar Renewable Energy Certificates. Net metering is required and there is a full retail credit. There are financial benefits to homeowners utilizing solar power.

Direct Energy solar started in 2008 by a couple of graduates from the University of Maryland. The company grew quickly. Since 2012 there have been 15 communities that have worked with the Solarize Massachusetts program. Direct Solar is located in Hopkinton MA and has a department that focuses on community solar programs.

The company wants to encourage many people in the community to go with solar. There is a low group price, with a tiered pricing structure, so that when the structure is achieved all benefit from that pricing. If you achieve 50 systems there is a sum of money that goes to the town. Not only benefit to the homeowner there is benefit to the municipality as well.

Millbury & Sutton ran a program in 2012 and Hopkinton as well as Franklin ran their own program. Throughout the state there are pockets of communities that ran these programs. Ashland, Franklin, New Bedford, Dartmouth and Natick, were eligible for Solarize Mass but decided to run their own program. The Town of Concord's program was extended due to the amount of interest in the program. Today in Concord there are 550 homes using solar.

If the Town of Grafton would agree and work with Direct Energy Solar, the company will work with Grafton to do community outreach trying to get a number of people interested and to help them go solar with the understanding this is a limit time and the benefit of a solar coach.

Ms. Appel further stated that Direct Solar has more experience more than anyone in the state. Marketing capability is easily done; providing a lot of online information and an online portal. There is a great amount of installation capacity, 15 teams of installers in MA.

Mr. Padgett asked if this is just a marketing group. Mr. Crocker responded by stating that this is one of the ways Direct Solar connects with communities. Mr. Padgett asked if after the program is finished, can someone still call the company after my neighbor has done it to get solar installed. Mr. Crocker stated that we can go back in after a couple of years.

Ms. Thomas asked if someone is still eligible they may not get the same discount if they sign up outside the timeline window that is set. Ms. Appel stated yes and said the goal is to drive a lot of solar power and realize that all good things must come to an end at some point. Ms. Thomas asked about Solarize Mass and when speaking about Grafton would it be connected to Solarizing Mass or not. Mr. Herrod stated no, it is a community based program. Additionally, Ms. Thomas asked if someone would quickly go over some of the products that Direct Solar uses. Mr. Herrod responded by stating that the industry uses certain size of panel and certain equipment. What you drive by and see now is typically what you see with different color panels and it is pretty much standard. You could put it in your yard for a ground mounted system also. Direct Solar is dedicated to the type of panel that allows each panel to operate independently.

Mr. Flynn asked what the rebate is. Ms. Appel stated if you buy a \$10k system you get \$3k as a Federal tax credit of 30%. The tax credit will expire at the end of 2016. Mr. Flynn also asked what happens if there is damage to panels from storms and the insurance track record. Mr. Crocker answered by stating that the panels are extremely durable can handle a baseball thrown at them at high speed, hail will not break them, however if a tree falls on a panel it will break. Ms. Appel stated the panels are guaranteed for 25 years. Mr. Flynn asked about insurance coverage. Mr. Herrod stated that it may cost \$20 -\$50 per year for additional coverage on your insurance policy. Mr. Flynn asks if there is any payback. Ms. Appel answered and stated that with incentives, they are seeing payback in four to five years and even homes with lower solar potential still see good payback. Mr. Flynn asked about some communities running their own

programs and asks why Concord did this instead of something else. Ms. Appel responded by indicated that Concord is a little unique and that they have a municipal light plant and are not eligible. The Benefit of Solar Mass is that they give you 2,500 and dictate your timeframes. Outreach is not hard if you work with a qualified installer you can set your own path. Artie, Gloucester not a muni light plant they went through the process of vetting companies and knew Artie in Needham.

Mr. Spinney asked if the commercial applications are slightly different that the residential and if Direct Solar supports both. Mr. Herrod stated yes, Direct Solar's experience has been based on residential, but now has a commercial division.

Mr. Dauphinais asked about the 20% savings going in and wondered what is it based on, your retail price? Ms. Appel stated that the 20% shown is actually calculated by the state based on the rebate, total contract price and size of the system. Mr. Dauphinais asked if he had another energy company go to his house and was told it would cost \$20k what would Direct Solar charge? Assuming at the retail rate, 20% lower \$16K would be the cost. Also get paid annually on creating energy and discount on less usage of power. Mr. Dauphinais asked how Direct Solar compares with other companies that do this. Mr. Herrod responded by saying if you bring in a handful of companies, most will be within our price range. We are saying within this town. Jill the thing it is never exclusive, anyone can check with any other company. Should be aware that there are other installations under power purchase agreements, which means the installer owns the system on the roof and only gets a little bit of a break. And don't provide the greatest financial benefit to the homeowners.

Mr. Herrod said with community pricing the resident will see their price is lower and there are other added benefits about working with Direct Solar as a company. The equipment is under warranty, and an extended warranty can be purchased. Ms. Appel stated there are no maintenance agreements.

Mr. Dauphinais stated that that one hang up he has is the 20% and that he would like to hear about past customers in other communities. Mr. Crocker stated that companies will compete and purchasers will get the benefits.

Mr. McInerney stated that there is not action needed by the Board, this is just informational. This seems to be the best company and thinks it should work for the Town.

Ms. Appel explained that all Solarize Mass pricing is public for anyone who would like to find out what it is.

Mr. Dauphinais asked Direct Solar what is the cost to the homeowner of taking a system down at the end of 25 years. Mr. Herrod answered and stated that it will be depend; it is not cut and dry. The actual cost will depend on the size and labor to take it down. Mr. Dauphinais asked if Mr. Herrod could compare it to the installation of a system. Mr. Herrod stated that is it would be someplace at 25% of the cost to install. Mr. Dauphinais asked what if you need to re-roof? Mr. Herrod stated that direct solar will remove the

system and store it but there is a price. Removal will be cost of labor. Ms. Appel added that Direct Solar has workshops to take these kinds of questions. Mr. Spinney asked how Direct Solar integrates them with building departments of towns. Mr. Herrod stated that the company set up a meeting with the Town to find out what is expected from them and how to make it quicker.

Ms. Doreen Defazio with the Town of Grafton Energy Committee and the Energy Manager in Millbury and Sutton addressed the Board and stated that one of the benefits of Direct Energy Solar is streamlining through one vendor. The Solarize Mass programs were not successful because the communities had to vet their own installer, the installer did not complete the projects. She additionally stated in her opinion that working with Direct Energy Solar is a good thing. Ms. Defazio asked if Grafton doesn't need to have a certain number of households sign up or if we were to regionalize would we get a greater savings. Mr. Herrod answered stating that typically the more communities brought in the better we can do on pricing. There could be a future meeting with the Board to regionalize for an even better rate.

Good Energy- John O'Rourke

Mr. McInerney introduced Mr. John O'Rourke from Good Energy.

Mr. O'Rourke provided information about Good Energy and Municipal Electricity Aggregation. Mr. O'Rourke stated that the process begins with a Town Meeting vote. Good Energy will come before Town Meeting and does not commit the town or Board with aggregation. Anyone can opt out without penalization. Mr. O'Rourke provided the Board with reasons to choose Good Energy and stated that the average time to get plans through is between 6 and 4 months, Good Energy averages 72 days.

Talking points for choosing Good Energy for Electricity Aggregation

1. National Leader in Municipal Electricity Aggregation
2. Mass leader in Municipal Electricity Aggregation
3. Large professional staff
4. Recognized industry leader in industry best practices
5. Excellent relationship with DOER and DPU
6. Perform all major aggregation function in house from local office

Mr. O'Rourke stated Good Energy is working with the Towns of Douglas and Northbridge and was recently selected by the Town of Millbury, Oxford and Charlton. The Town of Barre will be making a decision. The Town of Upton and Mendon has meetings upcoming, and the Towns of Blackstone, Milford and Webster to will be talking with Good Energy as well.

Mr. Flynn asked who the competition is. Mr. O'Rourke stated Colonial Power Group, Peregrine Energy. Good Energy has a large staff that is all in house. The Corporate office in New York with offices in Conway, MA, Norwalk CT. The company is a LP-Limited Partnership four partners. The head of Good Energy is Maximillian Hoover.

Mr. Spinney there is two parts to this, distribution and supply. Is Good Energy is on the supply side? Mr. O'Rourke confirmed this and stated that all companies calling are talking about the supply side. N-Grid does all transmission and infrastructure and that stays the same. There are legitimate offers and some that are not very good. Some give a teaser rate and a termination fee. People should not do anything over the phone; they can be switched over without their knowledge. Good Energy will enroll the whole town at one time, currently; Good Energy has 215,000 households enrolled.

Mr. Spinney asked what the impact on the homeowner would be if you lower their electric rate, will that lower what you would get back by having solar also? Mr. O'Rourke stated that both programs run independently.

Mr. Willardson asked when Good Energy will go out to vet again. Mr. O'Rourke stated at least 100,000 households in the spring. Then an 18 month bid. Mr. Willardson asked if the Town would need to have a Town Meeting before spring. Mr. O'Rourke stated yes. Mr. McNerney stated at the lasted we should have a Special Town Meeting would be the 2nd week in March. Mr. O'Rourke agreed.

Mr. Padgett asked that once Town Meeting passes this is everyone is in it. Mr. O'Rourke stated that Town Meeting authorizes it, and then Good Energy will go through DOER and DPU to approve it. There will then be an opt-out period. Residents will be sent information and post cards and a card that allows them to individually opt out, which they can do without penalty. Normally the rate will be so much better than the utility that the residents will not want to opt-out. Mr. Padgett also asked what will happen to other people that are with other suppliers. Mr. O'Rourke answered and stated that those people are not contacted; however the people with other competitive supplier can come to the program at the end of their supplier contract. Mr. Willardson asked if a resident can you opt-out and then opt in later. Mr. O'Rourke stated no.

Ms. Doreen Defazio from the Energy Study Committee addressed the Board and stated that the Town of Millbury chose Good Energy as their vendor. Sutton looked at Good Energy as a choice. Sutton interviewed vendors and went with Peregrine. Millbury did an RFP and went with Good Energy as they have the best outreach program. Northbridge went through 10 vendors and their top choice was Good Energy. Ms. Defazio stated that she feels this is a good idea for Grafton, giving the residents a choice to have a fixed rate with no penalty and the residents don't have to enroll if they don't want. Ms. Defazio stated she personally recommends Good Energy and suggests going through an RFP or interviews. Both Sutton and Millbury went through town meeting and there were no problems.

Mr. McNerney stated that there is no action tonight, but this will need a Special Town Meeting to move further.

Mr. Dauphinais asked to have this put on the Dec 15th BOS meeting agenda as a discussion item.

APPOINTMENTS

Town Administrator

Grafton Fire Department - Auxiliary Firefighters Promoted to Regular Status

- Mr. Taylor C. Joncas
- Mr. Michael G Bourisk
- Mr. John E. Moro

Mr. Padgett made a motion to affirm the appointment of Mr. Taylor C. Joncas, Mr. Michael G. Bourisk and Mr. John E. Moro from Auxiliary Firefighters to Regular Status. Ms. Thomas Seconded. All were in favor.

DPW- Part Time Snow Plow Driver- Brandon Doyle

Mr. Padgett made a motion to appoint Brandon Doyle to the position of Part Time Snow Plow Driver for the DPW. Mr. Flynn seconded. All were in favor.

Vote to Sign Traffic Signal Maintenance Agreement with MassDOT

Mr. Flynn made a motion to sign the traffic signal maintenance agreement with MassDOT. Mr. Thomas seconded. All were in favor.

Vote on Right of First Refusal- Chapter 40B

Mr. Padgett made a motion that the Board will not to exercise its right of first refusal for the 40B property at 47 Cherry Lane. Mr. Thomas seconded. All were in favor

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Mr. Spinney wanted to remind everyone of Representative Muradian's Coat Drive December 3rd at the VFW in Grafton.

TA REPORTS

Mr. McInerney provided his report:

- Roof for DPW building is complete
- Soffits and roof vents for SGCS has been completed
- Contract for the cell tower for Creeper Hill will be on the 12/15 agenda
- Grafton Celebrates the Holidays is December 6th

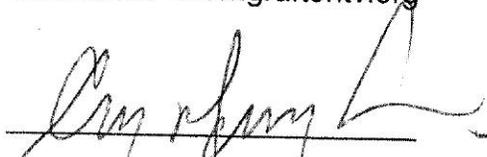
Mr. Willardson stated that the Police Depart is having Goods for Guns program on Saturday, December 12th from 9 AM - 1 pm. The GPD asks you to bring an unloaded

gun in a bag to the event and you will get a gift certificate. This will be going on Facebook.

ADJOURN

8:56pm Mr. Spinney made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Padgett seconded. All were in favor.

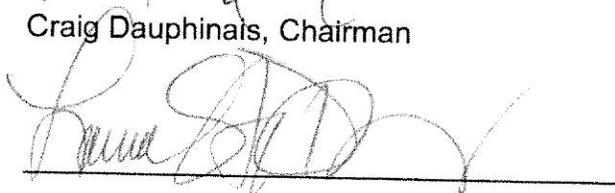
For more information, this and other meetings can be viewed on Grafton Community Television. www.graftontv.org



Craig Dauphinais, Chairman

12/15/15

Date Approved



Laura St. John-Dupuis, Recording Secretary